

REMARKS

Claims 4-6 and 10-16 were pending in the application. However, by this Amendment new claims 18-21 have been added. Thus, upon entry of this Amendment claims 4-6, 10-16, and 18-21 will be pending.

Claims 4-6 and 10-16 have been allowed.

New claims 18-21 have been added to provide a more adequate basis for protection of the invention. No new matter has been added.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

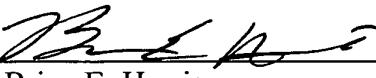
This Amendment increases the number of independent claims by three from four to seven and increases the total number of claims by four from ten to fourteen, but does not present any multiple dependency claims. Accordingly, a Response Transmittal and Fee Authorization form authorizing the amount of \$258.00 to be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260 is enclosed herewith in duplicate. However, if the Response Transmittal and Fee Authorization form is missing, insufficient, or otherwise inadequate, or if a fee, other than the issue fee, is required during the pendency of this application, please charge such fee to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260.

If an extension of time is required to enable this document to be timely filed and there is no separate Petition for Extension of Time filed herewith, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for a period of time sufficient to enable this document to be timely filed.

Application No.: 09/782,706
Preliminary Amendment dated January 15, 2004

Any fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time, and any other fee required by this document, other than the issue fee, and not submitted herewith, should be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Any refund should be credited to the same account.

Respectfully submitted,

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January 15, 2004

DAI 281331v3